

...FUNCTIONALITY OF A MASTER  
OF FILE... RESPECT FOR THE SEMICOLON

DRAWER 6A

Quotations

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# Abraham Lincoln Quotations & Sayings

“Punctuation is a Matter of  
Rule...”

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



# RECOLLECTED WORDS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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Also in Shaw, The Lincoln Enigma,  
& The Lincoln Treasury

Drawer 6a

50. In early December 1864, concerning the appropriateness of a semicolon in a paragraph that he had written for publication:

With educated people, I suppose, punctuation is a matter of rule; with me it is a matter of feeling. But I must say that I have a great respect for the semicolon; it's a very useful little chap. —Brooks-3, 566. {C}

51. Of a spectacular Union cavalry raid that did not achieve its primary purpose, Lincoln remarked:

That was good circus-riding; it will do to fill a column in the newspapers, but I don't see that it has brought anything else to pass. —Brooks-2, 227. {D}

Date, circumstance, and auditor are unspecified.

52. According to Brooks, Lincoln "often said" that:

the worst feature about newspapers was that they were so sure to be "ahead of the hounds," outrunning events and exciting expectations which were sure to be disappointed. —Brooks-2, 227-28. {D}

One wonders just how often, in Brooks's memory, Lincoln repeated himself on this subject and whether he varied his phrasing in doing so.

53. Once Lincoln declared that:

the keenest blow of all the war was at an early stage, when the disaster of Ball's Bluff and the death of his beloved Baker smote upon him like a whirlwind from a desert. —Brooks-2, 228. {D}

It is not clear that Brooks himself heard Lincoln make this remark.

54. Respecting objections to his conferring an appointment on a former opponent:

Nobody will deny that he is a first-rate man for the place, and I am bound to see that his opposition to me personally shall not interfere with my giving the people a good officer. —Brooks-2, 228. {D}

The date, person in question, and auditor are all unspecified.

55. One evening when Lincoln recited a long passage from the work of Petroleum V. Nasby, a visitor expressed surprise that he should commit such material to memory, and he replied:

Oh, I don't. If I like a thing, it just sticks after once reading it or hearing it. —Brooks-3, 564. {C}

56. Brooks quotes Lincoln as remarking cheerfully on one occasion:

I am very sure that if I do not go away from here a wiser man, I shall go away a better man for having learned here what a very poor sort of a man I am. —Brooks-2, 226. {D}

The date, context, and auditor are not specified.



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## PUNCTUATION



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-- Abraham Lincoln

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